

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 remain pending in the present application. Claim 1 has been amended. Basis for the amendment can be found throughout the specification, drawings and claims as originally filed. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), alleging them to be anticipated by U.S. Patent to Aota et al. The Examiner alleges that the Aota et al reference discloses Applicants' invention.

Applicants' invention defines a shaft assembly for interconnecting driving components of an agricultural machine and a driven component of an agricultural implement. A joint component of a universal joint operably interconnects one of the first and second shafts to one of the agricultural driving and driven components. The joint is both rotatable through a specified range of free motion rotation and is fixed for actual movement relative to one of the second shaft, the agricultural driving component of the agricultural machine and agricultural driven component of agricultural implement.

The Aota et al reference cited by the Examiner fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' invention. Aota relates to centering devices for steering columns. The Examiner alleges that "since steering columns are generally known to reside in agricultural equipment by those having and not having skilled in the art, then an agricultural implement can be defined as an agricultural device used in performance of a task such as turning a tractor steering wheel connected to a steering column."

However, the Examiner has failed to realize that one skilled in the art would realize that an agricultural implement pulled by the tractor is attached to the back of or to the front of the tractor. Also, one skilled in the art would know that in a steering column, one does not want play or free rotation. Having play or free rotation in the steering column would enable the steering wheel to not perform its intended function at the time, i.e., the user turns the steering wheel, with free rotation, the steering wheel does not react, the driver, either misses the turn or wrecks the vehicle. Thus, it is absurd to assume that a steering column mechanism, like Aota, would have any bearing or shed any light onto a tractor towing an agricultural implement. Thus, Applicants submit that Aota et al fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' invention. In fact, Aota is non-analogous art in the agricultural implement driving art, which is substantially different than the steering art.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,672,111 to Schremmer et al.

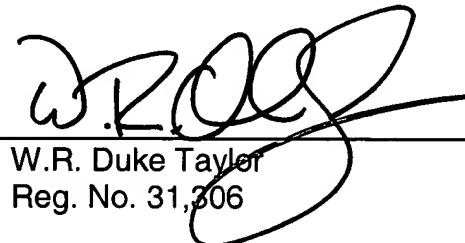
The Schremmer et al reference cited by the Examiner illustrates a steering spindle which utilizes a plastic layers. The plastic layer fills the clearance between the inner wall of the receiving tube and the spindle profile. Thus, Schremmer et al suggests a solution which does not provide for any free play in the rotational direction. Accordingly, Schremmer neither discloses nor suggests the free rotation of Applicants' device.

Accordingly, Applicants believe Claims 1-11, to be patentably distinct over both the Aota et al and Schremmer et al references. Neither reference, as pointed out above, discloses or suggests Applicants' invention.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to pass the case to issue at his earliest possible convenience. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present application, should not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 5, 2003

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